

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: US COOPERATION/ASSISTANCE IN SELECTIVE FOREIGN DRUG ABUSE
PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

REF: STATE 254205

1. WE BELIEVE THAT A U.S. PROGRAM TO ASSIST THAI DRUG PREVENTION ACTIVITIES IS AN EXCESSANT IDEA AND THAT IT WOULD REINFORCE OUR NARCOTICS PROGRAM. WHILE WE ARE NOT PREPARED AT THIS TIME TO PROPOSE SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND APPROXIMATE COSTS, WE CAN DESCRIBE A NUMBER OF WAYS IN WHICH WE COULD MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE ALREADY EXISTING THAI PROGRAMS WITH RELATIVELY MODEST EXPENDITURE.

2. THANYARAK HOSPITAL, ABOUT 30 KILOMETERS NORTH OF BANGKOK, IS THE MAJOR TREATMENT FACILITY IN THAILAND. THIS 500 BED HOSPITAL IS RUN BY THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND DR. SOMSONG KANCHANAHUTA IS THE DIRECTOR. PHRA MONGKUT KLAO HOSPITAL, A ROYAL THAI ARMY
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FACILITY, ALSO HAS A SMALL BUT WELL-RUN DRUG TREATMENT DEPARTMENT

UNDER DR. AROON SHOWANASSI, WHO ATTENDED THE MULTI-REGIONAL PROJECT ON DRUG ABUSE EARLIER THIS YEAR. DR. AROON MAINTAINS 45 BEDS FOR DRUG PATIENTS AND HOLDS TWO OUT-PATIENT CLINICS A WEEK. HE HAS ALSO ESTABLISHED A SMALL REHABILITATION AND FOLLOW-UP PROGRAM AND AN EDUCATION PROGRAM. DR. AROON'S MAIN WARD IS IN A BUILDING THAT WAS CONDEMNED FOR DESTRUCTION, BUT THROUGH PRIVATE DONATIONS HE WAS ABLE TO REPAIR IT AND KEEP IT RUNNING. THERE ARE ALSO SMALL TREATMENT FACILITIES IN THE PROVINCES OF LAMPANG, KHON KAEN AND SONGKHLA AND SEVERAL PRIVATE DRUG TREATMENT CENTERS IN THAILAND.

3. THE DIMENSION OF THE ADDICTION PROBLEM IN THAILAND REQUIRE AN EXPANSION OF EXISTING TREATMENT FACILITIES. THERE IS A LONG WAITING LIST AT DR. AROON'S TREATMENT CENTER. PROVINCIAL TREATMENT CENTERS ARE ESPECIALLY POOR. THE 20 BED LAMPANG ADDICT REHABILITATION

CENTER, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS NO DOCTOR AND HAS A WAITING LIST FOR ADMISSION NUMBERING 282. IF FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE WE WOULD IDENTIFY SPECIFIC PROJECTS WE COULD SUPPORT TO IMPROVE BOTH THE CAPABILITIES OF THE TREATMENT CENTERS AND THE QUALITY OF TREATMENT.

4. REHABILITATION: ALL THAIS INVOLVED IN DRUG ABUSE TREATMENT IDENTIFY REHABILITATION AND FOLLOW-UP AS A MAJOR WEAKNESS IN EXISTING PROGRAMS. SELECTIVE US ASSISTANCE COULD BE OF VALUE IN DEVELOPING THAI REHABILITATION PROGRAMS.

5. EDUCATION: THE THAI CENTRAL NARCOTICS BOARD SPONSORS AN EDUCATION PROGRAM IN BANGKOK SCHOOLS AND ALSO RUNS TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS AND POLICE WHO WILL WORK IN DRUG ABUSE EDUCATION. THE CNB WAS ALSO INSTRUMENTAL IN ORGANIZING A LIONS CLUB INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM OF DRUG EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THAILAND. FROM TIME TO TIME, CNB HAS REQUESTED US ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT ITS ACTIVITIES. RECENTLY THE CNB REQUESTED US ASSISTANCE IN MAKING COPIES OF AN EDUCATIONAL FILM ON ADDICTION PRODUCED BY TECHNICAL SCHOOL STUDENTS. USIS HAS BEEN ABLE TO FUND THE MAKING OF THREE COPIES. WE FEEL THAT THERE ARE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCH SUPPORT, NOT WITHIN USIS FUNDING CAPABILITY.

6. TRAINING: THERE IS A NEED FOR MORE TRAINED PERSONNEL WORKING IN THE FIELD OF DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ESPECIALLY IN THE PROVINCIAL TREATMENT CENTERS. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE US TO HELP SET UP A TRAINING CENTER FOR THOSE WHO WILL WORK IN DRUG TREATMENT PROGRAMS. ANOTHER IDEA, PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED BY DR. AROON, IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER IN BANGKOK. DR. AROON BELIEVES THAT IT WOULD BE CHEAPER AND MORE PRODUCTIVE TO TRAIN THOSE SOUTH EAST ASIANS WORKING IN DRUG ABUSE WITHIN THE REGION WHERE THE PROBLEMS ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THEIR OWN COUNTRIES.

7. PREVENTION: WE PLAN TO LOOK INTO THE AREA OF PREVENTIVE PROGRAMS IN MORE DETAIL WITH THE CENTRAL NARCOTICS BOARD AND WISH TO WITHOLD JUDGEMENT ON THE POSSIBILITIES IN THIS AREA.

8. RESEARCH: THERE ARE A NUMBER OF TOPICS WHICH LEND THEMSELVES TO US-SUPPORTED RESEARCH BY THAIS. FOR EXAMPLE, SMOKING HEROIN IS A COMMON FORM OF DRUG USAGE IN THAILAND, AND RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTS OF SMOKING AS OPPOSED TO INJECTING HEROIN WOULD BE VALUABLE. SELECTIVE US GRANTS FOR RESEARCH BY THAI PROFESSIONLS WOULD NOT ONLY CONTRIBUTE TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OF ADDICTION BUT WOULD ALSO ENCOURAGE MORE INTEREST IN THIS AREA WITHEN THE THAI MEDICAL PROFESSION.

9. WE BELIEVE U.S. SUPPORT TO PROGRAMS OUTLINED ABOVE WOULD BE MOST USEFUL AND WOULD REINFORCE OUR EFFORTS IN FIELDS OF ENFORCEMENT AND INCOME SUBSTITUTION. WHEN DECISION IS MADE TO FUND DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES, WE WILL INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITH THAI OFFICIALS TO DETERMINE WHAT SPECIFIC PROJECTS WOULD MEET THE CRITERIA SET DOWN IN THE REFTEL. PLEASE ADVISE SOONEST.
MASTERS

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